



Afternoon Alert - Monday, December 12, 2016

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## POLITICS

### **PM Abe to attend ceremony in Pearl Harbor on Dec. 28**

TBS reported at noon that Prime Minister Abe will attend a ceremony that is expected to start at 7 a.m. on Dec. 28 Japan time in Pearl Harbor together with President Obama. The network also said the two leaders are expected to hold their last summit before the ceremony for about 30 minutes to wrap up the bilateral relationship that has been strengthened under the eight years of the Obama administration. According to the network, Abe will also hold a memorial service the day before for those who died in the Ehime Maru incident 15 years ago, in which 9 people were killed.

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 10](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 9](#) (Nikkei)

## INTERNATIONAL

### **PM Abe meets with former residents of Northern Territories**

NHK reported this afternoon that Prime Minister Abe met with former residents of the Northern Territories at his official residence today ahead of his planned meeting with President Putin later this week in Yamaguchi. Abe reportedly told them that he would like to convey to Putin his determination to settle the territorial issue in his generation as many of the former residents have already passed away. Abe also reportedly said: "We have been engaging in negotiations for a long time based on the policy of resolving the sovereignty of the four islands and concluding a peace treaty. However, although more than 70 years have passed, we are facing the abnormal situation in which we have yet to conclude a peace treaty."

### **Suga comments on China's claims that SDF planes fired "interference bullets"**

NHK reported at noon that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga lodged a protest against China's accusation that SDF planes endangered six Chinese airplanes that passed between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island on Saturday morning by firing "interference bullets." He said: "We have been told that the SDF planes did not interfere with Chinese military planes at close range and did not endanger the planes or crew by firing 'interference bullets.' It is extremely regrettable that the Chinese military made such a unilateral announcement. This undermines our efforts to improve Japan-China relations, and we have lodged a strong protest against China." (*Other press reports refer to the "interference bullets" as "jamming shells" or "decoy flares."*)

- [Japan to launch new loan scheme for Russia](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Gloomy skies ahead for Japan-South Korea relations](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Park's impeachment leaves Japan fretting over power balance](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: S. Korea's President Park should step down soon](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: South Korea's political turmoil must be kept to a minimum](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan-U.S. Security Treaty becomes sticking point in territorial talks with Russia](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abduction issue minister indicates possibility of filing case against Kim Jong Un at the ICJ](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan, U.S. touch on N. Korea abduction issue at U.N. meeting](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan disregards U.S. opposition to Abe-Putin talks in Tokyo](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe's assistant to meet with Philippine president on Dec. 12](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan-U.S. joint ceremony held for 1st time to remember Pearl Harbor](#) (Kyodo News)

## **SECURITY**

### **Osprey training to "throw cold water" on NTA reversion**

Sunday's Okinawa Times reported that the Okinawa Defense Bureau is being put in an awkward position, as the U.S. military appears to be determined to continue conducting Osprey training involving unidentified cylindrical objects hanging from the fuselage of the aircraft even though the

bureau has pressed local U.S. military authorities to discontinue such training in response to protests from local residents. Bureau officials are afraid that these Osprey drills may intensify local opposition to the tilt-rotor plane ahead of the planned reversion of the Northern Training Area. As the Abe administration hopes to play up the return ceremony on Dec. 22, in which Ambassador Kennedy and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga plan to take part, bureau officials are worried that the latest Osprey issue will “throw cold water” on the celebratory mood of the reversion event.

### **Onaga approves of Naha port's relocation to Urasoe**

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged reports saying that Governor Onaga expressed at a prefectural assembly session on Friday approval of the plan to relocate the Naha Military Port to Urasoe that was included in the 1996 SACO final report. Onaga told reporters afterward that this is the construction of a civilian port rather than a new base. This is the first time for the governor to officially express approval of the plan. Okinawa Times wrote that some of Onaga's supporters are displeased with his approval of the port relocation plan and that this and his ambiguous position on the helipad construction at the Northern Training Area may undermine the governor's political base because the Japanese Communist Party, which backs Onaga, has expressed clear opposition to the relocation of any U.S. military bases within the prefecture. A senior LDP official commented that although the governor insists that the Henoko plan is the construction of a new military base, Henoko and Urasoe are the same in that they both involve the construction of replacement facilities.

### **GOJ to cut Okinawa budget for next fiscal year**

Sunday's Okinawa Times led with a speculative piece claiming that the central government is likely to allocate 310 billion yen in funding for Okinawa in FY2017, down 25 billion yen from this fiscal year due to budget constraints. A GOJ source reportedly dismissed the Okinawa prefectural government's request for maintaining the current level of spending by saying it would be "impossible." Subsidies for regional economic revitalization will probably sustain deep cuts.

- **Japan SDF in S. Sudan may withdraw if security worsens: defense chief** (Kyodo News)
- **Japanese peacekeepers ready to perform rescue mission in S. Sudan** (Kyodo News)
- **Editorial: Top court ruling on Atsugi base noise fails to hear the victims** (The Asahi Shimbun)
- **Stealth technology to be used for drone** (Akahata)
- **Editorial: Top court's Atsugi noise ruling puts premium on MSDF operations** (The Japan News)

- [Editorial: Top court's ruling on SDF nighttime flights at Atsugi base betrays locals](#) (The Mainichi)

## ECONOMY

- [Gist of integrated resort promotion bill \(legalizing casinos\)](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Annual price revision meets fierce opposition from drug manufacturers](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan mulls three scenarios after Diet ratification of TPP accord](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Pundits on how to promote free trade after Diet ratification of TPP accord](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Keidanren hails TPP ratification, but some firms worry about "U.S. exit"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan farms to put up "help wanted" sign](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Approval of TPP needed to keep momentum of free-trade deal alive](#) (The Japan News)
- [MAFF, MOFA, JETRO to set up export consultation offices in 60 cities worldwide](#) (Nikkei)

## SCIENCE

- [Kounotori cargo spacecraft successfully launched](#) (The Japan News)

## OPINION POLLS

- [Half of former Northern Territories residents say Japan should revise "package return" approach, Yomiuri-Hokkaido University poll](#) (Yomiuri)

## TV PROGRAMS

### Bob Dylan's magical lyrics

Saturday evening's "NHK Special" reported on Bob Dylan, who won this year's Nobel Prize in Literature. The program looked at his handwritten notes, demo tapes, and rehearsal videos, and reported on how Dylan writes his lyrics.

### Experts discuss how to prevent accidents involving elderly drivers

The issue of accidents involving elderly drivers is becoming a serious problem as Japanese society ages. During NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" debate show, six experts discussed ways to address the issue from the viewpoints of traffic safety and the welfare of elderly people. They talked about providing sufficient public transportation for elderly people in rural areas who find it necessary to drive for daily life, including medical appointments and grocery shopping.

### **Message from autistic writer Naoki Higashida**

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on Naoki Higashida, who published a book called "The Reason I Jump" in 2007, when he was 13 years old. The book provides insight into the minds of people with autism and became a bestseller in 30 nations around the world. Higashida, who is now 24 years old, is severely autistic and cannot communicate orally, but has exceptional ability to convey his thoughts by typing on a keyboard. The program showed him visiting writer David Mitchell, who translated Higashida's book into English, in Ireland and meeting with Mitchell's autistic son. When asked by Mitchell what he would say to a 13-year-old himself, he typed: "If I could give my 13-year-old self any piece of advice, it would not be words of encouragement. He would not have been able to listen to such words because he was having a really hard time. I would like to tell him the fact that life is short. At the time, the passage of time seemed endless, and I felt like I was on a swing that never stopped. I would like to tell him that the swing will eventually stop, and that if he keeps on swinging, he will be able to enjoy different views."

